

**BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

In the Matter of the Revocation	)	
	)	
or Suspension of the Educator	)	<b>AMENDED ORDER OF</b>
	)	
Certificate of Allenna J. Ward,	)	<b>PERMANENT REVOCATION</b>
A/K/A Allenna Williams Ward	)	
	)	
Certificate 225732	)	

**SUMMARY OF THE CASE**

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on March 12, 2008. In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-370(c) (2004), the State Board summarily suspended the educator certificate of Allenna J. Ward on March 14, 2007, based on allegations of misconduct that resulted in Ms. Ward's arrest and termination from Laurens County School District Fifty-six on February 28, 2007. The State Department of Education (Department) notified Ms. Ward of the summary suspension, as well as her right to a hearing regarding the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate, by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, delivery restricted to addressee. Ms. Ward received the notice as evidenced by a postal receipt bearing her signature. Ms. Ward did not request a hearing within the time frame specified in the notice letter. On April 10, 2007, after considering the information presented, the State Board voted to revoke Ms. Ward's certificate for a period of three years. The State Board ordered that should Ms. Ward ever wish to reapply for certification, she may not do so until after April 9, 2010. To be eligible for certification at that time, Ms. Ward would be required to meet all current certification requirements and submit to a character and fitness review by the State Board. On February 19, 2008, Ms. Ward, plead guilty as Allenna Williams Ward to three counts of criminal sexual conduct with a minor, second degree, in violation of S. C. Code Ann. § 16-3-655 (Supp. 2007). Pursuant to § 16-1-60 (2003), criminal sexual conduct with a minor, second degree, is classified as a violent crime. On February 19, 2008, Ms. Ward entered an Alford plea as Allenna Williams Ward to three counts of lewd act on a minor, in

violation of S. C. Code Ann. § 16-15-140 (2003). After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to permanently revoke Ms. Ward's educator certificate pursuant to § 59-25-280 (2004) as a result of her guilty plea to a violent crime.

#### **FINDINGS OF FACT**


Ms. Ward holds an initial educator certificate and has one year of teaching experience. Ms. Ward was terminated from her teaching position at Bell Street Middle School in Laurens County School District Fifty-six on February 28, 2007, following her arrest that same day on five counts of Criminal Sexual Conduct, Second Degree, and six counts of lewd act on a minor. Ms. Ward's arrest and her termination were based on allegations that she entered into sexual relationships with a number of male students. On March 14, 2007, the State Board summarily suspended the educator certificate of Allenna J. Ward based on allegations of misconduct that resulted in Ms. Ward's arrest and termination from Laurens County School District Fifty-six on February 28, 2007. On April 10, 2007, after considering the information presented, the State Board voted to revoke Ms. Ward's certificate for a period of three years. The State Board ordered that should Ms. Ward ever wish to reapply for certification, she may not do so until after April 9, 2010. To be eligible for certification at that time, Ms. Ward would be required to meet all current certification requirements and submit to a character and fitness review by the State Board. On February 19, 2008, Ms. Ward plead guilty as Allenna Williams Ward to three counts of criminal sexual conduct with a minor, second degree, in violation of S. C. Code Ann. § 16-3-655 (Supp. 2007). Pursuant to S. C. Code Ann § 16-1-60 (2003), criminal sexual conduct with a minor, second degree, is classified as a violent crime. On February 19, 2008, Ms. Ward entered an Alford plea as Allenna Williams Ward to three counts of lewd act on a minor, in violation of S.C. Code Ann. § 16-15-140 (2003). Ms. Ward is currently incarcerated at the State Department of Corrections.

#### CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"The South Carolina Board of Education may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2004). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct, crime against the law of this State or the United States, immorality, and evident unfitness for position for which employed. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004); 24 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58 (Supp. 2006). Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. §59-25-280 (A) (Supp. 2007), the State Board permanently revokes the certificate of Allenna J. Ward as the result of her guilty plea on February 19, 2008 as Allenna Williams Ward to three counts of criminal sexual conduct with a minor, second degree, in violation of S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-655 (Supp. 2007). Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 16-1-60 (2003), criminal sexual conduct with a minor, second degree, is classified as a violent crime. On February 19, 2008, Ms. Ward entered an Alford plea as Allenna Williams Ward to three counts of lewd act on a minor, in violation of S.C. Code Ann. § 16-15-140 (2003). The State Board finds that there is sufficient information to support the conclusion that just cause exists to permanently revoke the educator certificate of Allenna J. Ward. Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-280 (B) (Supp. 2007), a school district may not employ an educator in any capacity whose South Carolina certificate is revoked pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-280(A) (Supp. 2007). The permanent revocation of Ms. Ward's educator certificate 225732 shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By:

  
Al Simpson, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina  
March 12, 2008